NEWSbits

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October : How to Get Effective Tech Support!

with Ray Paternostro

At October's meeting, Ray Paternostro was the featured speaker and the subject of his presentation was: "How to Get Effective Tech Support". Using a PowerPoint Presentation, Ray gave his spin on just how ineffective tech support in existence can irritate both the caller and the technician who answers the call!

Armed with humorous anecdotes, Ray "tickled" the audience with tales of the "ignorant and the stupid" who places calls to tech support that at times can be as useful as a pin near a balloon and equally as disastrous when one considers that much of the tech support (which ranges from a free year to $99 and up for a 3-year stint). He pointed out that no one can get too far with support by phone: 1. If a call is made with an attitude (in a bad mood and pouring it on the technician). 2. If one expects to get the support with much distractions, such as a loud TV, eating while calling, and 3. Without being prepared as to serial number, type of computer, software and operating usage/types.

Lastly, Paternostro gave many examples of online help, such as using the online-support, FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions), Knowledge Bases information about the systems, online chat techs, and even faxes in lieu of the phone calls, which can bring one's call to India, Pakistan, Ireland, and the Philippines. Such calls, he added, can create linguistic problems where a language barrier is created between the 2 parties giving and receiving phone help.

Citing information placed on CCUG-PC website and links to other sites which can help, Ray said that such links were compiled to help/offer CCUG-PC a choice of where to seek help. It should be said that CCUG-PC has its own technical support message base on yahoo.com (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ccugpconline/). Thanks to Ray Paternostro for his informative and at times funny rendition of how to get effective (and a less nerve-wracking) tech support session.

Olympus D-580 Digital Camera

Capture large, colorful images!

This portable, 4 megapixel digital camera (11x14" prints), lets you choose between 7 different shooting modes or capture a mini movie with audio using QuickTime®. Download files to a computer with Auto-Connect USB or connect to a TV. Has a 3X Optical, built in flash, 1.8 LCD, single click.

Get your tickets today. Now—7 for $10.00!

Improve Your PC Skills & Help Your User Group At The Same Time!

Smart Computing In Plain English Click Here! Dec. 4

***with* Amber Coffin**

Nunez Community College Auditorium

Amber will step members through an issue of *Smart Computing*, convey the value of Smart Computing .com through a live demonstration, and introduce attendees to *Smart Computing's* sister publications - *PC Today, Computer Power User*, and *PC Novice Reference Series*. Each attendee will receive a packet of *Smart Computing* goodies and be eligible to win other *Smart Computing* merchandise.

The 13 Easy Steps to Installing a Primary Hard Drive

Believe it or not, all it takes is less than a half-an-hour and a Phillips screwdriver to install your primary IDE hard drive into your desktop PC. Simply follow this illustrated 13-step guide and it's mission accomplished! Please make sure you consult your user manual and other manufacturer- provided documentation while you complete the installation - you will need to refer to instructions at certain points in the operation.

1. The first step is obvious! Power down your PC! And for safety measures make sure you have unplugged all your power cords.

2. Next locate all the screws and/or clamps that hold the computer case and/or panels together..

3. Now it's time to gain access to the interior of the computer case. Simply remove the case or the panels that hold it together.

4. If your PC happens to have a removable hard drive bracket, now is the time to remove it! It's specially designed to be removed without hassles, and its absence will make this simple installation project even easier.

5. Now it's time to leaf through the documentation that came with your hard drive, along with any included diagrams, for instructions on how to set the jumpers on the drive. If you're the type of person who hates to read the instructions, bury your impulse to neglect this crucial step. If your system has but a single drive connected to the cable, use the "Cable Select" option; this will suffice in most cases when there is only one drive. If another drive exists it will be connected to the same IDE cable, using the "Master" setting.

6. You're almost halfway done! Wasn't that easy. Now the fun begins! Slide your hard drive into the drive bay, then fasten it down. Some cases employ a system in which slide rails mount onto the drive for easy insertion and removal from the drive bay.

7. Remember that removable drive bay bracket that you removed in Step 4? Now it's time to return it to the inside of the case.

8. You will find that most ATA/66 and ATA/100 IDE cables have either a blue connector or a connector labeled "System Board." In the likely case that this applies to your PC, plug this blue connector into either the IDE0 (Primary) or IDE1 (Secondary) connector on the motherboard. The primary connector is color-coded blue, in most circumstances, to indicate that it should be used for a hard drive. Usually, you can insert the cables in but one way. However, if the cable is not keyed for one-way insertion, make sure that the red stripe on the IDE cable matches up to "Pin 1" on the motherboard.

9. Attach your connector that is located the farthest distance on the ribbon cable to the hard drive. Usually this connector is either black or labeled "Primary." Make sure you place the red stripe on the cable at pin 1 of the hard drive's connector. Note: Most drives are keyed to allow the cable to fit in only one specific way.

10. Now locate a 4-pin power connector from the power supply. Simply attach it to the hard drive's power connector. You're almost done!

11. Next, replace your computer case or panel.

12. Tighten any screws or clamps to fasten down the case or panel.

13. Finally, reattach your computer's power supplies.

(Harddrive Install, continues on page 8)

Back to BASICS

"Have you tried "Back to Basics?" "Back to Basics" is a very popular member benefit.

Long time board member & Member Representative Margaret Wynn as well as other members have devoted themselves to helping members & new guests with their questions and problems in a semiprivate environment that is a quickly growing segment of our membership! *Meets from 9:30-10:20 A.M.. monthly before the general meeting.*

Try it once, you'll instantly want to join the group at a low price membership of only $25.00 per year...(Where else can you get so much information at about 2 bucks a month?) We're the "best kept secret in the whole Metro area" according to ***WWL-TV's Jerry Serigni of Digital Gumbo!*** Don't wait—join today and enjoy *all the member benefits!*

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hi CCUG-PC Members:

As it's been mostly hot these "fall" months, I've chosen to mostly stick it out near the house. However, it didn't get too long before summer clutter once again "confiscated" my leisure/computer room. Boxes of unknowns, and yet to be determined junk that I let accumulate since last fall cleanup once again made its way to corners, desks closets and shelves.

I realize what I have to do, but cool weather needs to arrive soon, unless I'm going to feel the claustrophobic stranglehold I get when things become so cluttered that my printers, monitor and lamps are now becoming shelves for papers, magazines and printouts. I realize it's a sickness that many of us have regarding accumulation of things we pile up on a daily basis.

One thing I'm hoping to do is what some of you (but nearly not as many as we'd hope) to do is to do similar housekeeping and help donate some of your unwanted *(but certainly not ancient or broken)* computer items to us for our monthly auction. Since we still are hopeful in bringing in new members with our new membership program of "Bring someone in to join, and get a free yearly annual membership!" — the fact still remains that we're in a position where fund-raising is needed (and always will be) more than ever. Helping the group by donating attractive computer-related items for our auction makes the auction colorful, interesting and hopefully beneficial to someone in need of recent technology stuff!

Secondly, not to harp too much of attendance, but it certainly encourages our speakers to volunteer on a regular basis when our presence is seen. It's our way of courteously saying, "we support you—because you're helping us with great technology information we need. You know, a give back for receiving attitude.

Now back to my clutter problem (see, you knew I've a half-brain that runs off on a tangent and returns to reclaim a thought after a brief hiatus!)..

I've decided to clean the garage (although the temperature gets around 100 at times and the fan does little but to toss around the dust that is blown off objects) this past couple of weeks. I've seen materials that I haven't witnessed in over 20 years since I built it! Some can be trashed, I hope because my aim is to clean the area to make room for the hoards of junk accumulating in this room. Since the attic has seen its days of storage, being overly-packed with last century's stuff—and Lord knows when I'll ever get back to it–I'll need to move stuff from my computer room to the garage.

So, I've a plan and if only if I can grin and bear the heat a short while longer, I'm praying for Fall to arrive in its glory, giving me strength to fight that "battle of the bulge" once again..

Jerry Montalbano

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NOTICE MEETING DATES!!

Upcoming in 2004

MAKE NOTE:
***** Dec. 4***
(**Meets at Nunez Community College)

All dates are subject to change with room availability permitted

1996 Lotus Intergalactic Newsletter

CCUG-PC

ARTICLE CONTRIBUTIONS

NEWSBITS Newsletter is published monthly by CCUG-PC. Articles for publication *must* be submitted, typewritten and on disk to our newsletter staff by the **15th** of the month for publication. We welcome all articles of computing interest and we reserve the right to edit when appropriate. **SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH US**. If you have a tip or technique with a software program (or hardware), please enlighten us. All computer related articles are welcomed. Please submit your contributions to us in a file of any disk format or upload to **jerryccug@cox.net** for our N**ewsbits Newsletter** Staff. CCUG-PC would love to hear from you! Submissions from our members, or reprints from other publications are welcomed, but do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Board of Directors nor the membership. Reprints are granted when credit is given to the author. Submissions of any content, articles or materials become property of CCUG-PC for sole use and publication.

FROM THE DEALS GUY

by Bob Click, **Greater Orlando Computer User Group**

Lets Understand The Darn Weather Better

I love this item and was able to put together a deal just in time for Christmas (what a great gift). I can't adequately describe this full-featured weather station so check their Web site. [http://www.peetbros.com] I am just now learning everything about mine. It's certainly full featured and I'm having great fun.

I installed it just hours before our latest hurricane, Jeanne, and spent more time checking the Ultimeter 100 data than checking the storm. It offers about any type of data and display you want and recorded my highest wind gust at 66 mph., 9/26/04, at 10:05 AM. I could have shown it in other units, as with all the data. Data can also be accessed by phone line. I'm now working on a better mount and location for my rain gauge.

Ultimeter 100 can be set to continuously scan wind speed, wind chill, temperature, today's rainfall, time and date, or just certain data. It also shows the wind direction. An alarm can be set for the danger of an impending flash flood if your area is prone, or for other possible situations. A 9V-battery backup retains your data in the event of a power failure. Pushing a button will give you highs or lows for any of the last seven days, or for long term.

This deal is a scoop since they are introducing a new feature, which is a "serial text" interface that works with your computer to view the weather station's accumulated data. Simply connect the serial cable, start Windows HyperTerminal on your computer, then by pushing buttons on your weather station, quickly view data from the Ultimeter 100 system's memory for various time periods and format it as you like on your computer. The feed updates each minute.

For just $199.00 you get the "Ultimeter 100" weather station (MSRP $199.00) bundled with an indoor temperature sensor (MSRP $12.95) and a 15' serial computer interface cable (MSRP $20.00), both of which are normally optional. The unit does include the anemometer wind vane and other necessary cables. There are other peripherals such as a self-emptying rain gage and "The Weather Picture" (a large digital display that can be read across the room), extensions for the cables and more.

The Ultimeter 100 is the only product offered with the bundle, but obviously they have other models and accessories to offer. Please mention the code "DealsGuy" when ordering this special $199.00 bundle. E-mail them at [peetbros@peetbros.com], or call them at 1-866-446-1216 or 1-321-206-6214. Shipping varies according to the dollar amount, but orders between $200 and $299 will cost $15.75 S&H. FL. residents should add 7% tax. If you're not convinced, call for their beautiful 10-page brochure that tells it all.

Your Badge Says It All

You may have seen digital badges at computer shows, as I have, and they took my eye. I bought one and have enjoyed mine. People comment when they see it since it really stands out. It scrolls your message, which can be up to 118 characters, in red LCD letters. You can vary the scrolling speed. Get more details at [http://www. bannerbadge.com] There's a video there of the Banner Badge scrolling a message, but in person, it looks much better than on that video according to my screen. You can order either a black or red one, and it comes with the programming kit. There is an optional USB-to-serial adapter, and the "Buddy" that will program it without your computer. The digital badge is a real eye-catcher and lots of fun.

Originally I purchased mine from another company and tried to make a deal with that company, but with no success. I consider them the losers. I later found this company, Banner Badge, in another show, and with much better prices. The Banner Badge guys were happy to give my readers a deal, which is 10% off the posted prices on the Web site. Unfortunately there's no way to enter a price code for the DealsGuy price when ordering so you'll need to e-mail them at [info@bannerbadge.com] or call them at 1-772-571-9944, and be sure to mention DealsGuy to get the 10% discount. What a great Christmas gift! Don't forget to order extra batteries at their low prices.

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound.

Bob (The Cheapskate) ***Click!!***

It's the heartbeat of CCUG-PC!

Volunteer!

Tech-Lovers Corner—TLC SIG

CCUG-PC has just established a new special interest group (SIG). As we may not have a permanent name but can develop one upon the success of the group Let's just say that the intermediates and advanced users have sought such an ensemble for them—and we have listened.

Beginning today from 9:30-10:15 a.m., TLC attendees have a special spot to meet (a designated area of the general meeting room) where intermediate/advanced members can hold roundtable discussions each general meeting.

Roundtable discussions are informal group meetings where more advanced topics are discussed, such as computer hardware, technologies, and software fixes, patches—you name it, there's no limitations, but to the knowledge of those in attendance.

The TLC group has been organized to address many issues that might be too complex for less experienced users. Users who might feel topics too complex can attend the *Back to Basics SIG* group hosted by Margaret Wynn in the Complex Conference Room behind the meeting room staging area. Please join us as we wish to *kick your computer habit up a notch!!!*

The HDD Buying Guide

** Hard Drives - Bigger is Better*
** But Size (GBs) Does Matter and So Does Speed (RPM)*
** When 2 Drives Are Better than One*

Purchasing a hard drive (HDD) is an important buying decision. That's because all your data is saved on it. If you buy a low quality hard drive it may crash on you and you'll lose all your games and all your digital data. In the end, though, hard drives are all about capacity. And, far more often than not, your biggest hard drives are the costliest. However, once the new models hit the market you will be able to purchase the earlier generation models for less cash. Additionally, the higher-performance (7200-rpm) drives are usually pricier than the more pedestrian (5400-rpm) drives at the same capacity and geez, are they cheap today!

(Hard Drives, Inside Look, continues on page 8)

Sorting Through the Camcorder Clutter

by Kim Komando

If a picture is worth a thousand words, there's no telling the value of capturing life's special moments on video. The problem is selecting the camcorder. With so many makes and models, you need to focus on the right features. Otherwise, you won't walk away with a camcorder that you can use and use well.

When shopping, you'll notice that there are many more digital camcorders than analog models. There's no choice here. Digital camcorders provide a significantly better picture and more options than analog. From here, center on the camcorder's following three features:

1. What is the recording format?

Most camcorders record onto tape or DVD. A few models have the ability to record onto memory cards. Forget those. The recording times are too short and the image quality is poor.

There are three digital tape formats: Digital8, MicroMV and MiniDV. All formats are erasable and reusable.

Digital8 and MicroMV are the least common formats. Digital8 camcorders are able to record on analog 8mm and Hi8 cassettes, as well as Digital8 tapes. A 60-minute tape costs about $5. MicroMV is hampered by a limited selection of cameras and hard-to-find tapes. The tapes are pricy, too--about $9 for a 60-minute tape.

MiniDV is the most ubiquitous format. There are many camcorder models to choose from and the media is relatively easy and cheap to find-- about $5 for a 60-minute tape.

There are a few disadvantages to using tape. You have to hook your camera up to your television to view your footage. And searching for specific scenes is difficult. Some cassettes are sold with special chips that index scenes, but these are often two or three times more expensive.

The alternative to tape is recording directly to DVD. Mini DVD-Rs can only be used once and cost about $7 for a 30-minute disc. Mini DVD-RAMs are reusable but cost $15 for a 60-minute disc.

With DVD-Rs, playback is a snap, because most DVD players accept them. Also, skipping around to different scenes is

(Komando, continues on page 7)

CCUG-PC

EVENTS CALENDAR

November, 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Oct 31 On Computers WODT AM 1280 12:05PM-3:00PM Web/CNet	*Nov 1* TechTV Daily-Mon-Fri The Screen Savers 6 PM Cox Ch.355	*Nov 2*	*Nov 3* *Can you write an article about a product you've tried?*	*Nov 4* *We can use your help! Just submit it to us. We'll do the rest!!*	*Nov 5*	*Nov 6* CCUG-PC Meets: 10AM *Digital Photography Tips*
Nov 7 On Computers WODT AM 1280 12:05PM-3:00PM Web/CNet	*Nov 8* TechTV Daily-Mon-Fri The Screen Savers 6 PM Cox Ch.355	*Nov 9*	*Nov 10*	*Nov 11* **Veterans Day** 	*Nov 12*	*Nov 13* Living with Electronics 10.am Radio 690 am
Nov 14 On Computers WODT AM 1280 12:05PM-3:00PM Web/CNet	*Nov 15*	*Nov 16* Newsbits Deadline	*Nov 17*	*Nov 18*	*Nov 19*	*Nov 20* Living with Electronics 10.am Radio 690 am Yom Kipper
Nov 21 On Computers WODT AM 1280 12:05PM-3:00PM Web/CNet	*Nov 22* TechTV Daily-Mon-Fri The Screen Savers 6PM Cox Ch.355	*Nov 23* **BOD Meeting** 	*Nov 24*	*Nov 25* **Thanksgiving Day** 	*Nov 26*	*Nov 27* Living with Electronics 10.am Radio 690 am
Nov 28 On Computers WODT AM 1280 12:05PM-3:00PM Web/CNet	*Nov 29* TechTV Daily-Mon-Fri The Screen Savers 6PM Cox Ch.355	*Nov 30*	*Dec 1*	*Dec 2*	*Dec 3* ⇨ **NOTE:**	*Dec 4* **CCUG-PC Meets: 10AM** *Smart Computing Magazine!*
Dec 5	*Dec 6*	*Dec 7*	*Dec 8*	*Dec 9*	*Dec 10*	*Dec 11* Living with Electronics 10.am Radio 690 am

CCUG-PC General Meeting

8201 W. Judge Perez (Gov't Complex Bldg.), Chalmette, LA.

Board of Directors Meeting

Nunez Community College Library Conference Room 1-102

CCUG-PC HELP! DESK

Questions & Answers

with Jerry Montalbano

Q ***I'm sick of seeing Windows XP Instant Messenger, running automatically, always a pain to me and wish to turn it off. How can I accomplish this?***

A The easiest way to turn off Windows Messenger (which is unrelated to Messenger Service, another troublesome utility) is to right-click the icon in the bottom right portion of your screen. Click: *Open.* When the Windows Messenger window opens, click Tools | Options.

Select the Preferences tab and clear the box next to "Run this program when Windows starts."

Unfortunately, it may still start when you run Microsoft Outlook or Internet Explorer. So try changing the folder name.

First, go to Windows Explorer (Start | All Programs | Accessories | Windows Explorer).

The path to the folder is C:\Program Files\Messenger. Right-click the Messenger folder and select Rename. Change the name to Messenger2 or something.

A second way is to dump Windows Messenger. In Windows Explorer, go to C:\Windows\Inf. Find the SYSOC.INF file. Open it in Notepad. Find the line that says, "msmsgs=msgrocm.dll,OcEntry,msmsgs.inf,hide,7" (without the quotation marks). Replace it with, "msmsgs=msgrocm.dll,OcEntry,msmsgs.inf,7" (again, leave out the quotation marks). Then, click Start | Control Panel. Double click Add or Remove Programs. Click Add/Remove Windows Components. Clear the check mark next to Windows Messenger.

Here's yet another way to solve the problem: Click Start | Run, then depress <Enter>:

Rundll32 advpack.dll,LaunchINFSection %windir%\INF\msmsgs.inf,BLC.Remove

(Do not put a period after Remove. Also, note the spaces after RunDll32 and INFSection.) Click OK and you'll be good to go with either of these tips.

(Komando continued from page 5)

easier than with tape.
But few DVD players will play DVD-RAMs. Plus, the media is expensive compared to tape.

2. Get the essential features.

If you're just starting out, make sure the camcorder has a full auto switch. This way, the camera automatically adjusts focus, color balance and exposure. All you have to do is click the record button and shoot. Once you gain familiarity with video, you can start using manual settings.

Look for an external microphone jack. Most camcorders have an adequate built-in microphone. But these microphones often will pick up everything--even mechanical noise from the camcorder itself! An external microphone provides better sound quality.

A built-in light will illuminate dark subjects. One of the most commonly recorded scenes is that of someone blowing out candles on a cake. Without the light, you'll only see candles and a dark shape.

3. Don't believe the hype.

Some camcorders promise to take 3- and 4-megapixel still photos as well. But those photos are not as good as ones shot with a dedicated digital camera. Don't let this unnecessary feature govern your buying decision.

Beware of outrageous zoom capabilities--you might see 300x or 400x. Concentrate on optical zoom. Digital zoom, a way of cropping and expanding an area at the expense of image quality, is much less important. Most cameras offer an optical zoom of 10x, which is fine.

Try different models with the features you want. Notice where the buttons are located. Avoid camcorders with tiny buttons close to where your hand holds it. You could hit something accidentally and miss your child's first steps.

It's not difficult to buy your first camcorder. Armed with this information and some practice using the camcord in the store, you should walk away a happy customer.

A little about Kim..

You can read my weekly syndicated column in over 100 Gannett newspapers across the country. I also host the three-hour weekend Kim Komando Show. Every weekday, you can hear my Computer Minute. I write a weekly column for USA Today, too.

(Hard Drives, Inside Look, continued from page 5)

Choosing a Top-Notch Hard Drive

* Capacity - We recommend at least 60 to 80GB; but the more the merrier!
* RPMs - Go for 7200RPM - it gives you faster read and write speed.
* Interface Speed - To get the max from your HDD the interface speed must match the interface speed of your PC.
* Seek Speed - Not a huge deal. It's how fast drives can pick a particular piece of data. 8ms or lower is an exceptional seek speed, but 8ms to 9ms is just fine.
* Buffer Size - Go for at least 2MB

Bigger is Better

It's generally a smart move to purchase the biggest hard drive capacity your budget will bear, even if you won't need all that drive space right away. Of course, larger hard drives cost more than smaller ones, but the cost per GB doesn't work out byte for byte. For example, the difference in cost between a 60GB and an 80GB HDD isn't much, but a huge HDD could cost quite a bit more. Hard drives are able to handle larger amounts of data all the time. And it's a good thing, because programs are getting more complex, graphics-intensive. You can now hold an amazing 400GB of data on a single drive. For those of you who hoard vast amounts of digital media or edit videos this ever-burgeoning hard drive capacity is a gift from cyber heaven. The proliferation of extra-large hard drives takes away some of the mystery out of HDD shopping. However, determining what size hard drive you need is a subjective matter. It really depends on how much data you need to store. Some folks can get by with 60GB on a desktop; others prefer the huge hard drives ranging from 120Gb all the way to 250GB or more. Size requirements, of course, differ for notebook computers. Before you get too involved in the GB numbers, though, you will need to check your motherboard's manual or with your computer manufacturer to see how big a hard drive your PC can support. We recommend that you start off with at least an 80GB hard drive.

The Need for Speed

The speed of a hard drive is expressed in revolutions per minute (RPM) and it refers to how fast the computer can read data from the hard drive. We recommend that your hard drive moves at a clip of at least 7200 RPM. At less than 7200RPM your data-intensive applications, such as games, might slow down because it takes too long access the data. You need at least 5400 RPM for fast data read and write speed. High RPM is especially critical if you use your computer for multimedia or video applications. Faster RPM doesn't make much difference for word processing or surfing the Net.

Secondary Considerations: Interface and Seek Speeds, as well as Buffer Size

Secondary considerations that taken together should have an impact on your buying decisions include Interface Speed, Seek Speed and Buffer Size.

Interface Speed

Interface speed is measured in ATA/100 or ATA/133. There isn't much noticeable difference between the two values. To get the maximum performance from your hard drive, its interface speed must match the interface speed of your PC. If not, you must install an interface card that matches the speed of the new drive.

Seek Speed

Average seek speed is how fast your drive can find a particular piece of data. This should not be a huge factor in your hard drive buying decision unless you need to copy large folders full of many small files, which makes it necessary for your PC to assemble small, scattered bits of data.

Buffer Size

The buffer is a memory cache on the drive. This cache is a repository for the temporary storage of data awaiting the next likely request of your computer's CPU. Because random-access-memory (RAM) is much faster than mechanical rotating storage, the buffer can speed up performance. Most new desktop hard drives have buffers of at least 2MB, which is perfectly acceptable for most uses.

Other Considerations:

* RAID
* SATA
* Moving Data to Another Drive

RAID!! What is it? Do You Need it?

In case you are interested, RAID stands for Redundant Array of Independent Disks. Simply stated, RAID allows you to use more than one hard drive to ratchet up your disk speed or retain a backup of your data in case a drive fails. In either circumstance, you will need more than one identical drives, and it's not particularly easy to configure them. More and more systems use RAID 0, which can markedly increase system speeds for reading and writing data. If you want to go for RAID you will need to choose a couple of drives that match the storage capacity you're looking for. Now that you can purchase 120GB hard drives for less than $100, you can easily go for the RAID advantage. Making this decision easier is the fact that most new motherboards support Redundant Array of Independent Disks.

Take Serial ATA Seriously?

Serial ATA, known as SATA is definitely the way to go if you are building your own PC from the ground up. Even the most inexpensive mobos support SATA, and if you go with a SATA drive your PC system will be easier to set up. Plus,

(HD Inside Look, continued from page 9)

About Your Dues!

—Bob Fauxcheux, Membership Secretary

Uh oh. Here we go! We're going to talk about the dues. The alarm just went off--Houston we have a problem; *this is not going to be good.*

Well, maybe not, let's take a look. The board in its wisdom has decided to shake things up a bit. Firstly, in the past, for every new member you brought in you would get a $5.00 credit when you renewed your dues. Now, for every new member you bring in, you will get a $25.00 credit toward your dues. Yep, bring in one new member you have a $25.00 credit; bring in a second new member and you will have a $50.00 credit you can use to renew your dues. *That's the same as a two-year membership at no cost to you.* For now, we are going to give this idea a test run for one year; beginning April 1, 2004 through March 31, 2005.

Now, for the married folks in the group and any families that want to join. You can now be a member under the family plan. Here is how it works: For the cost of one membership you can have your whole family as a member of CCUG-PC. Everything is the same as if your family were a single member; one newsletter, one white ticket, one red ticket and one place to sign on the sign-in sheet. *But your whole family gets the benefit of being a member of the group.*

Hey!! So what about the married coupes in the group that just renewed their dues? Well, any couples that have renewed their dues *since the first of this year will receive a credit for any amount above the cost of one membership.*

It's a good deal folks, take advantage of it and bring some friends to the meeting. They may like what they see and join, ***and then everybody wins!*** **BF**

(Hard drive Installation continued from page 9)

Voila! You're done. Your hard drive should now be installed and ready for operation. Now your computer BIOS must detect the hard drive the next time you power up your PC. Double-check your PC or motherboard user manual for instructions on how to detect a new hard drive.

Perhaps you may need to change some of the parameters in BIOS to detect the hard drive on the controller. You must also format the drive before it can be used with the operating system. Again, consult your manufacturer-supplied documentation for additional information.

Didya Notice??!! At the October Meeting?

- A presentation that lasted 1 hr. 20 minutes and a meeting that only lasted 1 hr. 50 minutes in length. With a new meeting format, a break has been eliminated to shorten time each month.
- A great deal of items were donated to the group at last month's meeting. Although the total receipts from winning bids taken in wasn't fabulous, many did donate items to make the auction interesting.
- Attendance is still down, but a few new members were signed.

(Hard Drives, Inside Look, continued from page 8)

you'll have a much easier time moving your drive to a future PC. Now if you want to boost the storage capacity of an older PC, choosing SATA is not such a simple proposition. In order to use a SATA drive you're going to have to add a SATA controller card, which can be costly. However, many of the new SATA controller cards have built-in options to add RAID support to your system. If you're a video editor or the kind of person who stores tons of digital data, it just might be worth your while. In the alternative, it's a wise choice to simply add a second parallel ATA drive. Some manufacturers are adding new wrinkles to SATA technology to enhance hard drive performance. For example, Seagate's Native Command Queuing (NCQ), which requires a native Serial ATA drive, accompanies one of its 160GB hard drives, improves performance by packing good aerial density, meaning it has more data than ordinary into a small space. NCQ allows the drive to master multiple outstanding commands simultaneously and utilizes an internal queue that can store up to 32 commands at once to allow the drive to quickly reorganize the commands so they can be written and read more efficiently. This particular Seagate drive with NCQ also uses 8MB of cache to help overall performance by caching sequential data hits.

Moving Your Data to Another Drive

When it comes time to add a new hard drive to your older PC, the new addition will almost always be faster than your existing drive. However, if all you do is install the new drive on your PC, you're going to maroon your operating system on the slower drive. In committing such an act of abandonment, you will forfeit some of the benefits of upgrading. So, make sure you use the newer, speedier hard drive as your boot drive. Hard-drive upgrade kits generally include software that will clone your existing drive to the new one, thus turning your faster drive into your boot drive.

CCUG-PC Chuckles

"The computer isn't down anymore .. but now the programmers are!"

October: *Site of the Month*

TREND MICRO

http://housecall.trendmicro.com/

HouseCall

Give your PC a FREE check-up!

HouseCall is a demonstration of the power of Web-based technologies that Trend Micro is developing to make deployment and management of virus protection in corporate settings fast and easy. You simply run the virus checker and it helps determine if there's a 'bug" sitting in your computer. Good source of checking "on the fly" when even your virus on your computer can become infected/tampered.

You can also get the latest virus alerts.

Upcoming . .

HOT → *Smart Computing Magazine*

HOT → *Corel Corporation-CorelDraw, WordPerfect, graphics*

December's Election: December 4

At next month's December 4th meeting, the following Board of Directors positions are up for election/re-election: President, Vice President, Membership Secretary, Programs Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer, and Member Representative. You can nominate someone of your choice in addition to the current officers offering to run for another term. The election and a final nomination prior to the election, will be also be

Printer Contest in January

The Annual Printer Contest will be held at our January meeting due to a change of location for our December 4th meeting at Nunez. Get your printouts ready to compete with other talented (and not-so-talented) entries!

SHAREWARE PICK OF THE WEEK:

(Try before you buy--smart software of all sorts...)

Windows: World Wind
View the Earth from outer space or zoom in to ground level. Satellite imagery and maps are used to display 3D images of the Earth.

Mac: EarthDesk
View a map of Earth on your desktop. This animated image continuously updates itself. Choose between political and satellite views.

Many shareware are available at download.com, cnet.com and shareware.com or a net search can assist your success.

Any of you who haven't joined the CCUG-PC Yahoo On-line Group are doing yourself and your PC a disservice. With all the things that are packed into a limited time frame for the monthly meetings we can't possibly answer all your questions fully or tell you: the latest news and virus alerts, software bugs and patches, scams, Trojans, spywares, new technology, workarounds, new software, great sites for pc resources, hardware and software bargains, the many MS bulletins that come out each month and more.

There's no time limit on our CCUG-PC Yahoo On-line Group We have over 500 members from all around the world who will take all the time needed to get your questions answered and your problems solved. You can post anything pc related and if it needs a reply check back at your convenience and see if anyone has one for you.

It also takes some of the stress off of Jerry and other techs as they can respond when time is available and not have to rush to something else to keep on schedule.

This is the best Free Support you'll find anywhere and you can do it from work or home! Try it, you'll like it.

Buster Matthews, Yahoo Group CCUG-PC On-line Moderator

Holiday Party Slated

CCUG-PC will again be hosting it's annual Holiday Party, tentatively on Tuesday, December 14th, from 7 P.M. - 9 P.M. at the Covenant United Methodist Church, 115 D'Amour St. in Chalmette, near Paris Road, next to Tastee Tonuts.

Sue Wessing, Programs Coordinator, will host the event. As in the past, it will be a pot-luck-covered disk event with members bringing dishes, dinner items, etc. Donations will be accepted by members attending and not in attendance. Sue will organize the list of items for the occasion, so by December's meeting, we'll know which items will need to be donated. More to come in next month's newsbits.

It's a ridiculously *simple* word — yet it means all the love in the world to organizations!

Member Classifieds

Selling?

Jerry Montalbano, Editor at 279-2761

Advertising Policy—Members are welcomed to place an advertisement for personal computer-related items in *Newsbits* at no cost. There could be limit-spacing on a first-come basis. Commercial ads from members and nonmembers are welcomed. ***Please notify us when sold or cancelled!***

CLASSIFIEDS

Your Member Ad here!

Have you a tip for a great utility, a cool website, a cure for a PC problem a lot of people have, or any local technology new? Please have them send it to Jerry Seregni (jerry@wwltv.com). If Jerry uses it for a 'Digital Gumbo' segment, he will send them a token of his gratitude and give you credit on-air!

Disclaimer

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Membership Dues:

CCUG-PC's *annual membership dues* are **$25.00.** Please keep abreast of your membership dues date. You can determine your expiration date by doing the following:

1. *Check your Newsbits mailing address label.*
2. Inquire at the membership table.
3. Remember your dues date from the time you joined.

AD SPOTLIGHT

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